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THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

examine the pictures and tapestries at Gobelins, and to suppress any which might be considered as incompatible with republican ideas. Of the tapestries in course of execution, twelve were condemned as ante-republican; of the pictures and cartoons, a hundred and twenty were eliminated as immoral, fanatic, or contrary to the republic, a hundred and thirty as not artistic, forty-five were considered too old for further use, besides a number of borders and fragments; finally only twenty found favor in the eyes of the jury. At la Savonnerie they rejected all the designs except two of "flowers on a reddish brown background." It was a sad time for the factory, the payments were irregular, depreciation in the value of paper money caused distress among the employees, and furthermore the government sold a considerable number of tapestries and carpets at a nominal price, in order to buy wheat or pay the contractors. Under the empire, however, activity was fully restored, through the personal interest and encouragement of Napoleon. Many of his orders were dated from the battle field, and he caused representations to be made of his life, his deeds and victories. Prosperity once more reigned. The first painters of the day themselves superintended the reproduction of their designs. The union, in 1826, of the carpet manufactory at la Savonnerie with the Gobelins works gave a great impulse to that industry. During the reigns of Charles X. and Louis Philippe many improvements were gradually made in the perfection of the work and durability of the dyes, and a school of practical dyeing was established. Since then the looms have been almost entirely occupied on the reproduction of the works of the great Italian masters, and it can be truly said that in the present day their tapestries have no rivals. In the International Exhibition of 1851 in London the chief medal was awarded to the manufactures of Gobelins and Beauvais, with a special mention of "The invention of the chromatic circle for the dyes used in the tapestries, the beauty and originality of the designs and the extraordinary perfection in the execution of the greater number of the products exhibited." M. Chevreuil, chosen director of the dyeing department in 1824, made many wonderful discoveries in the science of color, and he it was who invented the "chromatic circle," including over 14,000 different tones. The manufactory now includes, besides the work-shops, a dyeing room and chemists' laboratory, an exhibition gallery, a school for instruction in drawing, in tapestry and carpet making, and also an "atelier" for fine drawing, where portions of large hangings made in separate looms are joined together, and where torn or moth eaten tapestries are mended.

TABLES IN MOSAIC WORK.

THE mosaic work of Florence differs entirely from Roman mosaic, being composed of stones inserted in comparatively large masses; it is called work in *pietra dura*. The stones used are all, more or less, of a rare and precious nature. In old specimens, the most beautiful works are those in which the designs are of an arabesque character. The most remarkable specimen of this description of *pietra dura* is an octagonal table in the Gabinetto di Baroccio, in the Florence Gallery. It is valued at £20,000 sterling, and was commenced in 1623 by Jacopo Datelli, from designs by Ligozzi. Twenty-two artists worked upon it without interruption till it was terminated in the year 1649. Attempts at landscapes, and the imitation of natural objects were usually failures in modern times—mere works of labor which did not attain their object; but, more recently, works

have been produced in this art in which are represented groups of flowers and fruit, vases, musical instruments, and other compatible objects, with a truth and beauty which excite the utmost admiration and surprise. These pictures in stone, says Mr. C. H. Wilson, are, however, enormously expensive, and can only be seen in the palaces of the great. Two tables in the Palazzo Pitti are valued at £7,000, and this price is, by no means, excessive. These are of modern design on a ground of porphyry, and ten men were employed for four years on one of them, and a spot is pointed out not more than three inches square, on which a man had worked for ten months. But Florentine mosaic, like that of Rome, is not merely used for cabinets, tables, or other ornamental articles; the walls of the spacious chapel which is used as the burial place of the reigning family at Florence are lined with *pietra dura*, realizing the gem-encrusted halls of the Arabian tales.

STAMPED LEATHER.

BY PROFESSOR G. AITCHISON.

LEATHER at an early age was used for tents and hangings. We read in Arrian's "Life of Alexander the Great" that he made rafts of his leather tents; and in Egyptian and Assyrian bas-reliefs we see skins blown up and used to aid soldiers in crossing streams. Doubtless leather was colored and ornamented at a very early date, and afterwards gilt.

The Saracens who settled in Spain were celebrated for their leather work; in fact, our old name for a shoemaker—cordwainer—was derived from Cordova. Chaucer, who lived in the fourteenth century, described Sire Topas as having—

His shoon of Cordewan.

The Spaniards, who inherited their manufactories, were subsequently celebrated for their leather. Butler mentions it:—

Some have been kicked till they know whether
A shoe's of Spanish or Neats leather.

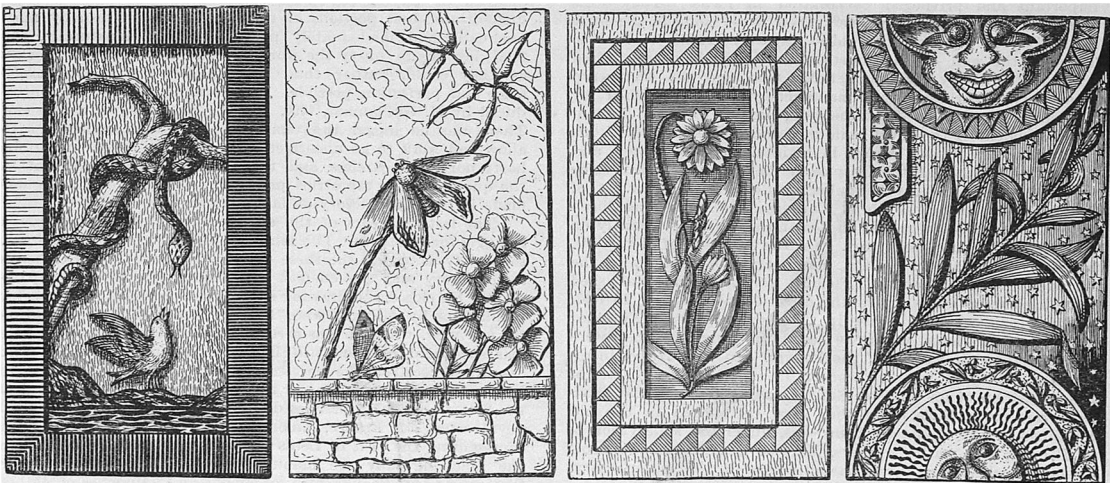
And they were also famous for their leather hangings, which were embossed, painted, and gilt, or rather, silvered and lacquered.

The only objection to real leather hangings is their getting baggy in damp weather. Thick leather was used at a very early period for shields and defensive armor, and we know it is still by the Zulus. Amongst civilized nations all armor was ornamented. One favorite way of ornamenting thick leather was to soak the leather till it was soft, presumably in hot water, and then force it into moulds, and it was then called boiled leather, or Cuir-bouilli. Sire Thopas' greaves were of this—

"His jameaux were of Cuirbouly."

I once saw a small panel of Cuir bouilli of the Italian Cinque Cento, exquisitely worked, which was sold to a collector for \$200.

When Japan was opened to Europeans, the Japanese were found to be the manufacturers of a material closely imitating embossed and enameled leather, some of which began to be used in England some twenty years ago, the only objection to it being a rather offensive smell like fish oil. It was said to be made of paper, and got the name of Japanese leather paper. Since that time the old European patterns of enameled leather have been sent out, and we now get almost any pattern we like. Enterprising men over here also started manufactures of leather paper, and it can now be got in continuous rolls of any length required, and so perfectly imitated that it can hardly be told from the original leather.



PANEL DESIGNS, BY W. ELKINS.